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Implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017)

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/216, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit a report on the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) detailing the response of the United Nations system to the theme "Full employment and decent work for all". The report reviews current progress, highlighting the system-wide plan of action for the Second Decade. It presents initiatives and activities being undertaken by relevant organizations of the United Nations system in response to the plan of action, and concludes with a set of recommendations.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report details the current response of the United Nations system to "Full employment and decent work for all", a theme of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017). It reviews progress over the past two years, highlighting the activities and collaborative initiatives being carried out by a number of entities to implement the system-wide plan of action for the Second Decade and to strengthen the coherence and coordination of the United Nations system in this regard. The information in the report is based on the contributions received from various entities within the system. The report concludes with a number of recommendations for consideration by the General Assembly.

II. Full employment, decent work and poverty

2. The selection of "Full employment and decent work for all" as a theme of the Second Decade underscores the recognition that poverty is a multidimensional and complex phenomenon that goes beyond income poverty, and addresses multiple deprivations facing the poor and the most vulnerable in the areas of employment, health, education, gender equality and social exclusion. The promotion of full and productive employment as one of the three pillars of social development, together with poverty eradication and social integration, was set by the World Summit for Social Development in 1995.

3. The linkages between poverty eradication and employment and decent work were further highlighted at the 2005 World Summit, which placed full and productive employment and decent work for all at the forefront of the United Nations development agenda. The Summit highlighted a global consensus that employment and decent work need to be at the centre of economic and social policies aimed at achieving the target of Millennium Development Goal 1, namely to reduce poverty by half by 2015. The inclusion of a new employment target under this Goal is further evidence of the centrality of full employment and decent work for all as an effective and sustainable pathway to poverty reduction.

4. In 2006, the Economic and Social Council addressed the issue of full employment and decent work for all and adopted a ministerial declaration reiterating the central role of employment and decent work in poverty eradication and development. The Council also stressed the need to integrate those objectives into relevant national and international development and poverty eradication strategies to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

5. With only five years to reach the targets of 2015, the achievement of poverty reduction is a significant challenge that has been made more difficult by the global food, energy and financial crises. Even before the crises, the lack of progress in creating productive and decent jobs despite relatively high rates of economic growth in many countries gave rise to a phenomenon referred to as "jobless growth". Subdued job growth and stagnant agricultural productivity in many rural areas are two major reasons for the persistence of poverty and the rise in the number of working poor.

6. The ongoing global financial and economic crisis has turned into a global jobs crisis, pushing the rates of unemployment to significantly higher levels. This has negatively affected the poor and the most vulnerable in particular. In 2008, some

633 million, namely 21.2 per cent of the world's workers, lived with their families on less than $1.25 a day and, in 2009, that number increased by up to 215 million, including 100 million in South Asia and 28 million in sub-Saharan Africa.[1] This suggests that up to 7 per cent more workers were at risk of falling into poverty between 2008 and 2009. While there may be some signs of recovery in a few large emerging economies, for the most vulnerable, the global crises are far from over. Unemployment and precarious work remain high. Incomes of poor households in urban and rural areas suffer from declining wages and earnings, increased informality, reverse migration and volatile prices of food and fuel. Prolonged joblessness is anticipated, as lessons from the past financial crises show that employment tends to recover some years after output recovery.

7. The reduction in employment and income opportunities has led to setbacks in the modest progress in poverty reduction. It threatens to undermine the prospects for achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, and calls into question the sustainability of global poverty reduction. This reality suggests the need for new, more flexible development strategies that focus as much on supporting the welfare of the poor as on strengthening productive capacities and creating opportunities for the majority of the labour force. Universal social protection and stronger employment policies and programmes are critical components. In the face of the crises, pragmatic policies that strike a balance between the imperative of fiscal sustainability and job recovery are essential.

8. As the crises persist, methods of more prolonged stabilization are being discussed, in an effort to suppress joblessness and support the goal of full employment. These include development-oriented macroeconomic policies and a reform of the international monetary and financial system. In 2008, the President of the General Assembly launched an important initiative to establish a Commission of Experts on Reforms of the International Monetary and Financial System. In its recommendations, the Commission recognized the need to protect people's livelihoods, and its report fed into the deliberations of the Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, held in June 2009.

9. In its key recommendations, the Conference emphasized the importance of moving away from a macroeconomic policy framework narrowly focused on controlling inflation and budget deficits to one that aims at full employment and decent work. The Conference also highlighted the need for enhanced policy and fiscal space to enable countries to address the human and social impacts of the crises and provide social protection (see General Assembly resolution 63/303). Both the Commission and the Conference highlighted the pivotal role that the United Nations must play in this regard, specifically in providing oversight and coordination of the global financial architecture to ensure that economic and social stability are bolstered and in providing technical assistance to Governments in the coordination of macroeconomic and development policy. The need for a strengthened and more coherent United Nations system in responding to the crises was deemed imperative.

[1] International Labour Organization, *Global Employment Trends*, January 2010.

III. Strengthened coherence of the United Nations system: a system-wide approach

10. Over the past two years, efforts were made to ensure better policy coherence and synergy and collaborative action through bringing together the respective capacities and expertise of the United Nations system in support of national efforts to promote employment and decent work towards poverty eradication.

11. As requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/230, the Secretary-General appointed the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs as the focal point for coordination of the implementation of the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017).

12. In collaboration with the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat submitted a proposal to develop a coordinated and coherent system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication with a focus on employment and decent work to the seventeenth session of the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB), held in February 2009. It was proposed that, as the principal body for system-wide coordination in the programme area, the Committee should establish a small time-bound cluster group of agencies to facilitate this process. Given the broad expression of interest by many agencies, a total of 21 United Nations agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions, co-led by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and ILO, prepared a draft system-wide plan of action for poverty eradication. The plan of action was reviewed and endorsed by the Committee at its meeting in October 2009.

13. The overall objective of the system-wide plan of action is to enhance the coherence of United Nations system-wide activities in the area of employment and decent work towards poverty eradication in the context of the ongoing global financial and economic crises.[2] It is built around activities where synergies would lead to substantial increased benefits. The framework and platform developed in support of the *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work* endorsed by the Board and promoted for use in Economic and Social Council resolution 2007/2 on the role of the United Nations system in providing full employment and decent work for all have proven an important basis upon which to build policy coherence. The objective of the toolkit is to enhance the impact of the United Nations system with respect to employment and decent work as a contribution to a system-wide coherent approach to poverty alleviation, development and employment promotion.

14. The ongoing financial and economic crisis and its impact have been taken into account in the follow-up to the mandate of General Assembly resolution 63/230 and the articulation of the system-wide response to the theme of the Second Decade. Two of the joint CEB crisis-response initiatives launched in 2009 against the backdrop of the global financial and economic crisis pertain to employment and decent work opportunities in particular, namely the Global Jobs Pact and the Social Protection Floor. The cluster group intends to liaise with the respective agencies leading these two initiatives, in order to avoid duplication of work, seek inputs to the work of the cluster group and foster mutual support.

[2] The plan of action is available from www.un.org/esa/socdev/social/poverty/2nddecade.html.

15. As a concrete step to strengthening United Nations system cohesion and coordination, the system-wide plan of action covers four types of joint activities: promoting greater awareness about employment and decent work as an effective development strategy for poverty eradication; strengthening capacity-building (training, skills development and knowledge-sharing); sharing good practices in promoting employment and decent work at the national and international levels; and providing support in integrating decent work towards poverty eradication into national and international policies and programmes.

16. The plan of action places particular emphasis on employment creation, including youth employment; social protection, especially of the poor and other vulnerable groups; standards and rights at work; and the impact of the global crisis on employment. In implementing these activities, the United Nations system plans to work closely with Member States, non-governmental organizations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders, in support of national efforts to eradicate poverty.

IV. United Nations system-wide plan of action for the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017): activities and collaborative initiatives

17. The various agencies, funds, programmes and regional commissions of the United Nations system have applied the goals of the plan of action for the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) in the formulation of niche activities and collaborative efforts aimed at achieving full employment and decent work for all. The activities described below are based on the contributions received from the featured organizations.

A. Promote greater awareness about employment and decent work as an effective development strategy for poverty eradication

18. The plan of action seeks outcomes such as the commitment by Member States and other key stakeholders to promote full employment and decent work for poverty eradication, in particular by creating employment for disadvantaged groups, building a partnership for the Second Decade, and promoting the Global Jobs Pact and Social Protection Floor Initiatives.

19. In realizing its mandate, ILO is devoted to advancing opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity. Decent work country programmes are the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries. The objectives of these programmes are to promote decent work as a key component of national development strategies and to organize ILO knowledge, instruments, advocacy and cooperation at the service of its tripartite constituents in a results-based framework to advance the decent work agenda.

20. The ILO played a leading role in the establishment and promotion of the Global Jobs Pact, which was adopted at the International Labour Conference in June 2009 and endorsed by CEB, the Economic and Social Council and, more recently, the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The Pact is a global partnership

framework aimed at assisting the poor and the vulnerable through the acceleration of employment creation, the promotion of sustainable enterprise, the establishment of social protection systems and the strengthening of labour standards and social dialogue. It provides a portfolio of crisis-response measures built around the decent work agenda, which aims at reducing the time lag between output recovery and the recovery of decent work opportunities. It is also one of CEB's nine crisis-response initiatives. The ILO is the lead agency, and the initiatives to implement the goals of the Pact are being developed in collaboration with other cooperating agencies.

21. The ILO has acted with the World Health Organization (WHO), as co-lead agency for the CEB Social Protection Floor Initiative. The agencies recently released a manual and strategic framework for joint United Nations country operations that offers policy strategies and tools for ensuring a minimum level of access to services, including health and education and income security for all. Knowledge and success stories are being shared among the countries drawing on a variety of methodologies, including South-South learning, triangular training and online and distance learning.

22. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) has also been instrumental in promoting decent work as a poverty eradication strategy. Rural employment is part of FAO's strategic objective, which aims to provide an enabling environment for markets to improve livelihoods and rural development. Decent rural employment concerns are also directly linked with such strategic objectives as improved food security and better nutrition and gender equity in access to resources, goods, services and decision-making in rural areas. *The State of Food and Agriculture 2010* will therefore focus on gender and agriculture and address gender inequalities in rural labour markets. It will also examine decent work conditions in rural areas, reflecting on such qualitative characteristics of rural employment as occupational safety and health and social protection.

23. The FAO has been actively involved in awareness-raising activities in relation to decent work, in particular in the context of the abolition of child labour in agriculture, as well as gender and rural employment. It has committed to work with ILO to improve and diversify the livelihoods of the rural poor, both women and men, and to broaden opportunities for decent work and full employment in rural areas. The two organizations also collaborate within the International Partnership for Cooperation on Child Labour in Agriculture by organizing joint workshops and annual events for World Day against Child Labour.

24. The UNDP recognizes employment as the mediating variable between growth and poverty reduction and as being central to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. The UNDP strategic plan mandates its contribution to the ILO-led Global Jobs Pact. Like ILO, UNDP emphasizes job creation through sustainable private sector development; macroeconomic reforms and sectoral policies to promote employment-led growth; entrepreneurship development initiatives to promote self-employment and small enterprise development; capacity development initiatives to promote investment and competitiveness in employment growth-potential sectors; access to finance initiatives to encourage investment and employment growth in micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises; vocational education and training initiatives; and temporary employment creation and employment guarantee schemes.

25. Consistent with the requirements of the Global Jobs Pact, UNDP's analytical efforts will focus on six thematic areas: promoting "green" jobs that maximize the effect of investments in environmental conservation and rehabilitation with employment creation and poverty reduction in developing countries; understanding the impact of specific policy measures on employment creation, including microcredit programmes; exploring, with ILO, the linkages between business environment reforms and transition to the formal sector; promoting policy best practices that increase the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises and economic sectors with the potential for employment growth; and identifying opportunities for sustainable private-sector investments that increase employment opportunities for the poor.

26. In its support of the activities of the least developed countries, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) has also emphasized that decent work in the productive sectors is key to lifting people out of poverty. The third conference of the Ministers of Industry and Trade of the least developed countries, held in Vienna in December 2009, examined the impact of the global economic crisis on the least developed countries and its repercussions in the short and medium term. The ministerial declaration and plan of action endorsed by the General Conference will be implemented through policy strategy and research projects. These activities will focus on priority areas in which scope for employment is essential, namely agro-industries, innovation and technology transfer, private sector development, including corporate social responsibility and decent work, and policy space, governance and institution-building.

27. Through its corporate social responsibility activities and advocacy as a member of the Global Compact, UNIDO promotes the benefits of decent work as an integral strategy for increasing productivity and competitiveness in developing economies. For example, in 2009, its field office in Viet Nam developed an initiative to promote corporate social responsibility among Vietnamese small and medium-sized enterprises, to improve linkages with global supply chains in sustainable production.

28. The World Bank's framework to achieve sustainable poverty reduction emphasizes the need to promote the creation of more and better jobs, given that labour is the main asset of the poor. It has developed a conceptual framework called "MILES" that brings together five sets of policies: macroeconomics, investment climate and infrastructure, labour market regulations and institutions, education and skills development, and social protection. The World Bank contributes to raising awareness about decent work through research to support the implementation of the MILES framework, the publication of books, social protection discussion papers, employment policy primers, a social protection and labour website, and a social protection blog.

29. Within the United Nations Secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs is responsible for promoting and supporting international cooperation to advance the United Nations development agenda, in particular poverty eradication. Its key activities include providing normative and policy support to the intergovernmental processes in economic, social and environmental areas, conducting analysis and research on key development challenges and policy options, namely the eradication of poverty, and operational activities.

30. In providing support to the intergovernmental process, the Department has engaged in activities to raise the visibility of the critical role of full employment and decent work for all in poverty eradication. Specifically, the Commission for Social Development focused its 2007-2008 biennial cycle on the priority theme "Promoting full employment and decent work for all", taking into account its relationship to poverty eradication and social integration (see E/CN.5/2008/4). It held high-level panel discussions on the priority theme and on the theme "Full employment and decent work: intensification of efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women". In support of these intergovernmental deliberations, the Department prepared substantive reports and convened expert group meetings and the United Nations Development Cooperation Forum on the theme of employment and decent work.

31. In 2009-2010, the Commission discussed the impact of the global crises on employment and social development, and policy responses on employment and the social consequences of the financial and economic crisis, including its gender dimension. At its 2011-2012 review and policy sessions, the Commission will consider poverty eradication, taking into account its relationship to full employment and decent work for all and social integration.

32. The Department's recent flagship publication, *Report on the World Social Situation 2010: Rethinking Poverty*, is also key in its recent promotion of full employment and decent work as a means of poverty reduction. The report reviews global, regional and selected country poverty trends and reflects on issues of poverty measurement, with the intent of contributing to a better understanding of the complex and multidimensional aspects of poverty. It recommends a reconsideration of the policy approaches that have dominated the discourse on growth and poverty to date. The report considers the contribution of both the growth- and inequality-centred approaches to poverty reduction, including macroeconomic policies and labour market and other social policies, and urges the promotion of inclusive development that benefits poor people.

33. The publication *World Economic Situation and Prospects* is a collaborative effort of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the five regional commissions that has played a significant role in the Department's efforts to promote full employment and decent work as central to poverty eradication and sustainable development. More specifically, *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2010* addresses the connection between rising employment instability and poverty, as well as the need to ensure better coordination of macroeconomic policy to promote long-term stabilization, which could support the goal of full employment. As the convening body of the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, the Department recently initiated the process to help Member States build their macroeconomic capacity.

34. The Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) also supports the promotion of the decent work agenda and undertakes research and analysis on the evolution of the Latin American and Caribbean labour markets and the need to improve the contribution to poverty reduction in the region. The Commission's flagship publications, *Economic Survey of Latin America and the Caribbean* and *Preliminary Overview of the Economies of Latin America and the*

Caribbean, discuss the evolution of jobs and wages and analyse the impact of economic growth on the labour market.

35. In addition, *Social Panorama of Latin America*, another ECLAC publication, regularly contains specific chapters on issues related to the labour market, with an emphasis on its link to poverty reduction. The 2008 report analysed the contribution of job growth, labour incomes and demographic factors to the reduction of poverty registered in the region before the economic and financial crisis.

B. Strengthen capacity-building through training, skills development and knowledge-sharing

36. In its aim to ensure that the activities of the United Nations system support the integration of decent work towards poverty eradication into national and international policies and programmes, the plan of action also seeks to enhance the capacity of countries in this area and to promote sectoral, national and international policies to address decent work as a pathway to eradicate poverty.

37. The FAO has been actively involved in several capacity-building activities on decent work through different partnerships and programmes. In 2007-2008, a self-assessment of the employment dimensions of FAO's work was undertaken, using the United Nations system-wide *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work*. Based on the outcomes of the self-assessment, an FAO rural employment strategy was formulated to mainstream decent rural employment within the organization and enable it to provide support to member countries in the design and implementation of effective policies, strategies and programmes to promote decent rural employment.

38. The FAO has also been involved in numerous employment-related United Nations joint programmes, including on enhancing youth employability and entrepreneurship in several countries in Africa and Asia. The promotion of rural youth employment has been ensured mainly through the Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools skills-building approach. Over the past several years, this training was promoted in 17 countries, with some 25,000 youths graduating from the schools.

39. The ILO has undertaken efforts to strengthen the national capacity of countries to collect labour and employment statistics and has embarked on a comprehensive approach to compiling detailed indicator definitions of decent work, as well as decent work country profiles. In-depth reports are being prepared for 10 countries. The organization is also providing technical assistance to countries to improve data collection for reporting on Millennium Development Goal 1, target 1.B, "Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people".

40. The ILO International Training Centre at Turin, Italy, has also contributed to building the institutional capacity of ILO constituents and partners through training and promoting knowledge-sharing. The Centre has helped to translate ILO knowledge into learning tools and processes and to disseminate its standards, principles and policies to a large international audience. Training activities covered a broad range of subjects related to the decent work agenda and to capacity-building for economic and social development. Over 900 training and learning activities were implemented, involving 24,000 participants from 190 countries, including ILO and

other United Nations staff. Over 25 per cent were representatives of employers' or workers' organizations, and approximately 43 per cent were women.

41. The ILO has also responded to a significant number of requests from countries for support in establishing and improving labour market analysis and national employment policy development. Particular progress was made in helping Africa to focus on its priorities. Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Madagascar, the Niger, Nigeria, Togo and the United Republic of Tanzania developed national employment policies endorsed by the social partners that included components of the global employment agenda, and moved towards action planning. Other regions made strides that reflect the comparative strength of the ILO presence in Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

42. The ILO has also developed employment impact assessment tools and has promoted the assessment of employment potential in public infrastructure investments. It provides technical assistance in designing, monitoring and evaluating the impact of infrastructure components of public investment programmes and holds open courses for Government officials and social partners at the Turin Centre.

43. The UNDP has undertaken capacity development initiatives to promote investment and competitiveness in sectors with potential for employment growth. These initiatives account for the single largest share of UNDP employment and private sector development programming. They include measures to support the development of regional and local economic development agencies, business service centres and a growing portfolio of value-chain interventions designed to build the capacity of small producers, connect them to new markets and address policy, institutional and other constraints.

44. Examples of UNDP country-level programmes include a project linking textile and apparel small and medium-sized enterprises to manufacturers and international brands in Turkey; assistance in upgrading production and standards in the garment sector in the Lao People's Democratic Republic; and support for small-scale farmers and agricultural value chains in several countries.

45. The UNDP also has programmes to support labour-market restructuring through vocational education and training focused on three main areas: the direct delivery of vocational training; workforce integration (assisting such excluded groups as youth, women, the long-term unemployed, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities and ex-combatants in acquiring skills and accessing new employment opportunities); and capacity-building for such labour-market institutions as line ministries, public employment services and vocational training centres. For example, the UNDP office in Kosovo initiated an institutional and enterprise-based training scheme that combines core employability skills with enterprise-based training, to provide job-specific skills to unskilled youths who are seeking work. In 2008, 526 young people benefited from the programme. Other examples of such projects include vocational education and training programmes for women in Jordan, street children in Kyrgyzstan and intravenous drug users and HIV victims in Poland; and the establishment of youth-employment resource centres in the Syrian Arab Republic.

46. Within its urban niche, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

In 2009, over 660 youth benefited from training in construction skills and low-cost building technologies under the UN-Habitat Lake Victoria Region Water and Sanitation Initiative. The Initiative supports youth groups to become small-scale operators of water and sanitation facilities, and training is designed to maximize income and expand the opportunities for youth to engage in the small business sector.

47. UN-Habitat and UNIDO initiated a project to promote income generation and the improvement of rural employment in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania, as part of an urban-rural linkages programme. The main objective of the project is to enhance the capacity of vulnerable groups to participate in the employment and income-generation process and to promote urban-rural integrated development through production and market linkages between urban and rural areas.

48. Within its focus on industrial enterprise, UNIDO developed its Responsible Entrepreneurs Achievement Programme to build the capacity of small and medium-sized enterprises to implement corporate social responsibility-based management approaches and operation methods, aligning economic, social and environmental aspects of business. In December 2009, a training course was organized for business advisers from different regions.

49. UNIDO continues to work with other agencies to build capacity in corporate social responsibility among the private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises. Decent work is a core element of those programmes. The UNIDO Entrepreneurship Curriculum Programme teaches entrepreneurial skills to secondary-level schoolchildren and vocational training institutes in both urban and rural areas of Mozambique, Namibia, Timor-Leste and Uganda, providing young people with practical tools for economic opportunities, including employment.

50. The World Tourism Organization (WTO) provides technical assistance to countries to promote tourism as an engine to foster socio-economic development and create employment and decent work, especially for disadvantaged groups. It addresses human resources development in the tourism sector, by developing strategies and organizing training. Human resources development and employment creation are also explicitly mentioned in tourism master plans, tourism laws and destination management plans that WTO helps to develop. The contribution of tourism to local economic development is addressed in projects that focus on pro-poor tourism development. In projects implemented at the local level, WTO engages the local government and liaises with local workers' associations and local employers' organizations. In many projects, multi-stakeholder collaboration is established to help the tourism sector work for the poor.

51. At the World Bank, capacity-building is a major priority and is actively pursued in several areas. The labour market core course "Jobs for a globalizing world: labour market policy" offers a learning experience on how employment is being transformed in today's rapidly changing, globalizing environment. The joint ILO-World Bank training course "Coping with the global job crisis in South-East Europe" contributed to a better understanding of the role of policies and institutions, and their interactions, in determining labour market performance and social inclusion in South-East Europe in the context of the global job crisis. The upcoming course on "Promoting job quality and productive employment in the Middle East

labour market and employment policies, taking into account changing labour market realities in the region.

52. Within the Latin American and Caribbean region, ECLAC plays an important role in improving the fundamental sources for the analysis of labour markets and decent work, especially national household surveys. ECLAC prepared a manual on the inclusion of modules on ageing in household surveys, that includes a specific proposal to collect information on social security, employment and poverty in old age. It also conducted studies on the effects of trade agreements, specifically the Dominican Republic-Central America-United States Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR), on employment and poverty. To have a positive and significant impact on job creation, the agreements must be accompanied by adequate macroeconomic and employment policies geared to promoting economic growth, employment and human capital formation.

C. Share best practices in promoting employment and decent work at the national and international levels

53. Sharing good practices in promoting employment and decent work facilitates the identification of areas where system-wide collaboration would lead to substantial increased benefits for poverty eradication. The plan of action aims to enhance the activities of the United Nations system in the area of employment and decent work for poverty eradication through the sharing of experiences, training programmes and good practices related to the four pillars of decent work and through the exchange of gender-sensitive information. Specific attention is paid to youth and other vulnerable segments of the workforce and to specific issues faced by informal and rural workers.

54. The FAO has an innovative database on sources of income, which currently includes 32 surveys covering 15 countries from different regions. The rural income-generating activities data set includes both household-level income information and detailed information on wage employment in urban and rural areas. It is used to examine key policy issues, including income diversification, rural wage employment and gender and rural employment.

55. The ILO produces timely information and statistical data on labour market trends, which are indispensable for the preparation of appropriate policy responses. This information is published in, inter alia, *Global Employment Trends*, *World of Work Report* and *Global Wage Report*.

56. Through its knowledge networks, UNDP provides a mechanism for the exchange of practical experiences and knowledge on the implementation of employment-related programmes. In the past two years, the networks have channelled questions regarding how to proactively identify demand for employment in private sectors in Panama and evaluate training providers; implement employment guarantee programmes for the urban poor in India; develop programmes targeting both educated and unskilled youth in Tunisia; and determine a baseline for a women's self-employment project in Timor-Leste. The networks also provide a platform for e-discussion on conceptual issues, such as the linkages between employment and poverty reduction.

57. In collaboration with its regional bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, UNDP organized a conference to explore experiences on employment guarantee schemes in 2009. The event was attended by academics, experts and UNDP representatives of Latin American country offices.

58. The National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme in India is an example of one such UNDP-supported programme. Within the scheme, a minimum of 100 days' wage employment is guaranteed to all eligible persons. The UNDP generated awareness about the scheme among potential participants, informing them about their rights and the benefits of the programme. This proved to be crucial in creating demand for work, and helped to ensure transparency in payment of wages and efficiency in administration by introducing innovative technologies such as "smart" cards and by digitizing information.

59. Fourteen CEB member agencies carried out self-assessments and developed action plans using the CEB *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work*. At the country level, the toolkit was used for the preparation of United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs) or joint programmes in Argentina, Indonesia, Pakistan, Serbia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Viet Nam and Yemen.

60. The WTO programme on sustainable tourism for the elimination of poverty provides information on the relationship between tourism and poverty reduction, implements projects to make the tourism sector work for the poor, and strives to include the poverty reduction potential of tourism in poverty reduction strategy papers.

61. The Youth Employment Network, a partnership between ILO, the World Bank and the United Nations Secretariat, facilitates the exchange of information on what works in youth-employment policies and programmes through an international workshop featuring best practices and experiences in the design and implementation of youth-employment programmes. Through capacity-building activities for policymakers and youth-employment practitioners, the Network has raised awareness about the importance of measuring the results of youth-employment programmes and has promoted the use of evaluation evidence in the design and implementation of youth-employment initiatives.

62. The ILO and the World Bank are engaged in the dissemination of lessons learned in several areas of social assistance through: the pooling of knowledge on public works programmes; developing a map of social assistance programmes; labour market research and analysis; ILO core labour standards; and youth and children, through the Understanding Children's Work initiative.

63. The most recent international conferences on social protection and employment organized by the World Bank focused on achieving social protection for all and disseminating the lessons of public works experiences. At the Second Rio de Janeiro Conference on Human Development, the World Bank launched its report "Achieving effective social protection for all in Latin America and the Caribbean: from right to reality", which featured the results of a study in Latin America and the Caribbean on universal social protection through improved redistribution and the adaptation of programmes to labour markets.

64. The World Bank's public works learning forum in Arusha shared knowledge

implementation of public works programmes. The main objectives were to share emerging experiences on "how to" aspects of public works programmes in low-income countries; lay the groundwork for the formation of a "community of practice" that would continue to share knowledge and expertise; and catalyse improved understanding of the role of public works programmes as part of national safety net and social protection agendas.

65. ECLAC encourages the sharing of experiences on the inclusion of the right to decent work and social security in international standards and policies on ageing at meetings of experts and national and regional seminars. A recently concluded technical cooperation project analysed the integration of vulnerable groups in the labour markets of selected countries, emphasizing the situation of low-skilled women and youth. Policy options were studied and discussed with policymakers and other stakeholders at national workshops and a regional seminar.

66. In cooperation with the Ibero-American Youth Organization, ECLAC published two volumes of reports on multiple issues concerning young people in Latin America, such as their living and cultural conditions, education and youth labour markets. The reports include recommendations on the different policy areas covered, and were presented at summit meetings and other governmental and non-governmental forums to stimulate intraregional debate on this issue.

D. Support the integration of decent work and poverty eradication into national and international policies and programmes

67. The plan of action strives to better equip the United Nations system to maximize the effectiveness of its poverty eradication efforts and to better support Member States to implement their national initiatives.

68. The FAO helps to ensure that rural employment creation, access to land and income diversification are integrated into agricultural and rural development policies, programmes and partnerships.

69. The FAO is preparing country profiles for selected developing countries on social and gender inequalities, with a focus on income diversification and rural employment. These profiles will serve as a policy support tool to develop a strategic country support approach towards a better reflection of decent rural employment considerations in national policies and development plans. The approach will be implemented in close collaboration with United Nations country teams and inter-agency mechanisms, including UNDAFs, the United Nations joint programmes and decent work country programmes.

70. The FAO is also promoting advocacy work on the importance of decent rural employment considerations in the framework of the Comprehensive Africa Development Programme of the New Partnership for Africa's Development as the main delivery mechanism of investment in agriculture in Africa. In particular, FAO is supporting the mainstreaming of decent rural employment considerations in several national and regional compacts of the Comprehensive Africa Development Programme.

71. At the global level, UNDP is working to operationalize the concept of employment-led growth and, in particular, to enable Governments to evaluate trade-offs between the promotion of employment-intensive economic sectors and the

demands of long-term productivity and competitiveness. Meanwhile, building on earlier work on the growth-employment-poverty nexus, UNDP will advocate for the integration of employment-led growth strategies, including private sector development strategies, in poverty reduction strategy papers and other national programming frameworks.

72. The UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), ILO and the International Organization for Migration in Albania started the implementation of a joint programme on youth employment and migration funded through the "Millennium Development Goal achievement fund". The project is being piloted in two regions of Albania, and seeks to enhance youth employment and migration management through better alignment of the national strategies that address those issues. It builds on three interlinked outcomes that aim to strengthen the capacity of labour market institutions to integrate and operationalize national policy priorities through a coherent youth-employment action plan; devise strategies that minimize the risks of migration of disadvantaged youth from rural areas; and increase the positive impact of migration.

73. The Poverty-Environment Initiative of UNDP and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) provides support to countries to mainstream pro-poor environmental sustainability into national development processes. Such mainstreaming will ensure that poverty reduction is not undermined by unsustainable use of environmental resources.

74. In partnership with other United Nations organizations, UNEP and ILO support countries under the Green Economy and Green Jobs Initiatives to design pathways to environmentally and socially sustainable development. The Green Jobs Initiative aims to promote opportunity and equity and mobilize Governments, employers and workers to engage in dialogue on coherent policies and effective programmes leading to a green economy, with green jobs and decent work for all. The *Green Jobs Report: Towards Decent Work in a Sustainable Low-carbon World* sheds light on the impact that transformation to a green economy will have on work, on enterprise and on the way people earn a living. The partnership is currently working on a green economy project aimed at making a macroeconomic case for increasing public and private investments in "green sectors". The Green Economy Report will attempt to show that such investments contribute to economic development, the creation of decent jobs and poverty reduction in developing countries, while reducing carbon emissions and environmental degradation.

75. UN-Habitat has undertaken several activities, including the organization of networking and learning events, the incorporation of policy statements in campaign messages on sustainable urbanization and rural development, and the sharing of lessons learned from the "Opportunities Fund for Urban Youth-Led Development" initiative. In collaboration with UNEP, ILO, UNICEF and the Global Compact, UN-Habitat organized 24 training events on employment and job-related issues at the fifth session of the World Urban Forum in March 2010. It also launched the World Urban Campaign to promote smarter, greener and more equitable cities. This campaign aims to increase the importance of sustainable urbanization in public policy and public and private investments, and to mobilize global partners.

76. *State of the Urban Youth 2010/2011: Levelling the Playing Field* is the first report that supplements the *State of the World's Cities Report* with a focus on urban youth. The report calls for international and national support for urban youth and

focuses on youth exclusion from opportunities in urban areas, to raise the visibility of this critical issue. It argues for targeted youth programmes to ensure their equal access to opportunities and highlights two key issues affecting youth, namely access to education and employment.

77. Through the World Bank's Social Investment and Employment Promotion Project in Bulgaria, more than 700,000 people benefited from small social infrastructure improvements and services at the municipal and community levels. Approximately 25,000 people benefited from such activities as improved employment services, training for vulnerable people, small business support through virtual incubators, and local economic development planning, and some 6,000 people were placed in jobs.

78. In Brazil, the World Bank is undertaking an economic and sectoral programme on job quality to support the creation of more and better jobs. The programme aims to deepen understanding of the behaviour of labour markets in Brazil by identifying and analysing a range of job quality indicators; identifying the linkages between growth and trade patterns, employment creation and job quality; and providing guidance to labour market analysts to identify policies that enhance the quality of jobs.

79. In 2008, the World Bank initiated the Rural Migrant Skills Development and Employment Project in China, to support the transition of rural workers to urban areas to access better employment opportunities. Policies and institutional capacity-building measures in the areas of skills development, employment services and worker protection are the main priorities of the project. The measures aim to enhance the capacity of the targeted provinces to deliver training, improve the provision of labour market information and public employment services for rural migrants, improve the employment conditions of migrant workers, increase awareness of workers' rights, and support legal services for migrants.

80. The World Bank is currently preparing several regional studies, with a view to developing strategies to reduce informality and increase the employability of vulnerable workers. This includes a study on informality in the Middle East and North Africa and another on jobs in South Asia. The World Bank is also preparing a flagship report on skills and employability in several regions.

81. The Youth Employment Network initiated an exercise to establish benchmarks for youth employment policies through collecting and sharing information on youth labour market indicators in the Network's lead countries and actions taken by Governments to address youth unemployment and underemployment. The goal is to identify benchmarks for successful gender-sensitive youth employment initiatives that can be shared and replicated in peer lead countries.

82. The involvement of civil society partners is instrumental in realizing the objectives of the plan of action. The United Nations Non-Governmental Liaison Service has issued a publication, entitled *Decent Work and Fair Globalization: A Guide to Policy Dialogue*, which recognizes that the policy implications of reintegrating full productive employment in the global economic and development agenda have not yet been fully explored. The publication maps out the ramifications of this commitment in terms of holding economic governance institutions more accountable for implementing the goals related to full and decent employment. It aims to strengthen the advocacy of civil society organizations campaigning for

greater economic and social justice by providing tools for more informed policy dialogue on how to align macroeconomic, trade and financial policies with these new objectives.

83. Minimum wages and labour inspections are important instruments for progress in achieving decent work. In Central America and Mexico, ECLAC has undertaken a study on the advantages and disadvantages of minimum wage regulations and in-shop labour inspection as policy instruments to promote quality jobs and economic development, and has developed corresponding proposals for the improvement of these instruments.

84. ECLAC has also studied the benefits of integrating specific groups such as older workers and migrants in the labour market. It has also analysed the dynamics of rural labour markets, stressing the need to tailor national employment policies to rural and urban markets and promote greater gender equality.

85. Together with the ILO regional office, ECLAC has published two bulletins on the impact of the financial and economic crisis on the Latin American and Caribbean labour markets, that show how the work and living conditions of millions of people have deteriorated because of the crisis, reversing the previous trend of poverty reduction in the region. The bulletins highlight the fact that previous macroeconomic policies had reduced the vulnerability of the region's economies and created space for countercyclical policies to be applied during the crisis. A broad set of labour market policies has also been implemented, and the bulletins highlight good practices in this policy area.

V. Conclusion and recommendations

86. **The Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) is an important framework for action to enhance the activities of the United Nations system in support of national efforts to eradicate poverty, in particular national development strategies. Its aim of coordinating international support for the eradication of poverty serves as a key link in support of the integrated follow-up to the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.**

87. **The theme of "Full employment and decent work for all" has been a critical and timely theme, in particular against the backdrop of the unfolding global financial and economic crisis. It has earned broad support from the United Nations system and has resulted in improved policy coherence and coordination on the part of United Nations agencies in promoting and implementing employment and decent work for poverty eradication. The United Nations system has joined forces and committed to specific implementation steps, as spelled out in the United Nations system-wide plan of action for the Second Decade endorsed by the High-level Committee on Programmes of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination. The plan of action provides an important instrument through which Member States and the United Nations system can effectively address the global priority of employment and decent work for poverty eradication.**

88. **The major threat to global efforts for poverty eradication during the Second Decade will be the crises and their impacts on employment and decent**

work opportunities. An effective response to this threat will require renewed efforts to further enhance policy coherence and cooperation in the United Nations system. The successful implementation of the goals of the Second Decade, including the system-wide plan of action, requires increased efforts and collaboration by Member States, civil society, non-governmental organizations, and all relevant partners.

89. The General Assembly may wish to consider the following recommendations:

(a) Call upon Member States to continue to support the theme "Full employment and decent work for all" for the Second United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (2008-2017) and the related United Nations system-wide plan of action for the Second Decade;

(b) Call upon the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to continue to give priority to implementing the system-wide plan of action for the Second Decade, in collaboration with Member States, civil society, non-governmental organizations and all other stakeholders;

(c) Urge the relevant organizations of the United Nations system to continue their joint activity to implement the Global Jobs Pact and the Social Protection Floor, in close cooperation with Member States, to further promote policy coherence and coordination;

(d) Urge the United Nations system to implement the outcome of the United Nations Conference on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development, in particular its recommendations on policy changes and reforms, and the reform of the international financial and economic system, in support of the objectives of the Second Decade;

(e) Urge the United Nations system to support Member States in strengthening their macroeconomic policy capacity and national development strategies for achieving full employment and decent work;

(f) Encourage greater convergence and inter-agency collaboration in sharing knowledge, policy dialogue, facilitating synergies, mobilizing funds and providing technical assistance in the key policy areas underlying the decent work agenda, while avoiding duplication of efforts and strengthening system-wide policy coherence on employment issues;

(g) Urge the United Nations system to continue to pursue the implementation of the Chief Executives Board's *Toolkit for Mainstreaming Employment and Decent Work* to improve coherence and efficiency in delivering as one on employment, decent work and poverty reduction.